

APPENDIX C: THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF TRAFFICKING ON CHILDREN

Child trafficking is considered one of the worst forms of child labor under ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor to which the United States, Togo and many other countries are signatories. ILO Convention 182 categorizes child trafficking as belonging to the same category as forced labor. Specifically, Convention 182 identifies four categories of the worst forms of child labor, and calls for their immediate elimination:

- ◆ All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children; debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labor; including force or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- ◆ The use, procurement or offering of a child for prostitution, production of pornography or pornographic performances;
- ◆ The use, procurement or offering of a child for illicit activities in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- ◆ Work which by its nature or by the circumstances by which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of children.

Children who are trafficked often engage in one or more of the above-mentioned categories of the worst forms of child labor.

As noted by the ILO in a recent report, *Trafficking of Children: The Problem and Responses Worldwide*, (available electronically at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/publ/childtraf/trafficking.pdf>), child trafficking can occur within national boundaries, but can also cross borders and regions. “The victims, mostly separated from their families and communities end up in prostitution and other exploitative forms of work, such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing, fishing, begging and domestic service. They are defenceless against abuse and exploitation and traumatized...” (ILO, *Trafficking of Children*, p. iii).

It is estimated that millions of children in many countries are trafficked, but the exact number of victims is unknown. Often the children who are victims of trafficking come from impoverished or rural areas/countries and go to urban areas of the same country, or to wealthier countries. Trafficking involves a series of actions and actors (including recruiters, intermediaries, transporters, employers, and family members) at different points, from point of origin to final destination. The final outcome is the exploitation through work of the child being relocated, and a serious compromise of the child's access to education and other aspects of healthy human development. The exploitation is manifested through the abusive conditions to which the child is subjected, including physical and mental abuse, confinement, inadequate or non-existent health care, poor accommodation, and hazardous work.

Trafficking is a complex issue involving a series of motivations and aspirations that are both benevolent and malevolent. Children and their families can be drawn into trafficking through persuasion and/or deception. They are led to believe that a child will be better off because he/she will receive an education or job skills, earn money, and be cared for by adults with more means than their parents. In many such cases, children or their families approach the recruiters, who take advantage of parents' hopes and aspirations for their own personal gain. In other cases, children are trafficked as a result of deception, threat or coercion.

As noted in the ILO report on trafficking cited above, among factors that encourage trafficking are poverty; the desire to earn a living and help support family; low level of education of parents; scarcity of schools; political conflict and natural disasters that devastate local economies; cultural attitudes toward children, and girls in particular;

and inadequate local laws and regulations or lack of enforcement. The consequences of child trafficking include death or permanent damage to physical and mental health; drug dependency; family disintegration; the risk of violence, physical and emotional damage due to premature sexual activity, and exposure to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). In the case of girls there is also the risk of pregnancy, early motherhood, and reproductive illnesses that might affect future reproductive ability.